

December 7, 2009

Dear Local School Restructuring Team (LSRT) Chairpersons:

As we enter the holiday season, we also enter the annual budgeting season. Feedback from last year's budget process was quite clear about the need for more time for LSRT's to work with the principals on goals and planning so that they might provide principals with the best and most knowledgeable input on the budget. In addition, the city-wide budgeting process and the formulation of student enrollment projections are other factors in budget development. All city agencies are required to submit budgets to the Mayor and the Council by March. This requires DCPS to finalize school-level budgets, as part of the whole agency budget by February. However, the window in which we can do budgeting is limited as projected enrollment numbers will not be finalized until January.

For these reasons, we began the budget process just before Thanksgiving—the DCPS preliminary budget hearing was held on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, and will move forward on a timeline in order to facilitate robust community input. The development of school budgets will begin on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

By starting in December, we will be on track in terms of the city-wide calendar, and can also provide schools with the maximum amount of time available to work with their LSRTs on school year 2010-2011. For our Title I schools, this date also corresponds with the finalization of Comprehensive School Plans, which can then be utilized to drive the budget conversations.

The official kick-off for the budget process will begin on December 16<sup>th</sup> at an all-principals meeting. At this meeting, principals will be given guidance on formulating their school's budget and a timeline of events stretching to the finalized budgets in mid-February. Principals will also be given preliminary numbers to think about in formulating the budget.

Later in the evening of December 16<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30-8:00, the Chancellor's Community Forum at Patterson Elementary will complete the budget kick-off with a focus on school budgets. We request that you and fellow LSRT members attend this meeting. Patterson Elementary School is at 4399 South Capitol Terrace SW.

Continuing through the months of December and January, DCPS will offer a series of budgeting information sessions for LSRTs, to provide technical assistance and support towards budgeting. There will be more information about these sessions at the December 16<sup>th</sup> Community Forum. No school's budget will be approved unless the school's LSRT or Budget Committee chairperson has participated in the school's budget development process.

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By early January, schools will receive their finalized enrollment projections and have until February 3, 2010, to submit a final budget.

We look forward to seeing you on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Rhee", is enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Michelle Rhee